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The Chronicle of the
EARLY AMERICAN INDUSTRIES ASSOCIATION
Published from time to time for the Information of its Members

Volume II **December, 1942** **Number 22**

Americanism in Early Silver Making

By MARSHALL DAVIDSON

Every time I hear the word, "curator," I am just a little bit upset. I remember the classic remark of Sir Purdon Clark, who was at one time the Director of the Metropolitan Museum, when someone asked him what, in his consideration, were the prime qualifications for a good curator. His reply was, "a bluff and a guess, and nobody to contradict."

As a matter of fact, I do feel as I were here on false pretenses this morning. I have a number of slides, which pretty much tell their own story, and there are that many of them that I won't be able to say very much about any one. The slides themselves show some of the important phases of silversmithing. You may be familiar with a number of these, as they have been used for illustrations in the magazine *Antiques* in the past.

RAISING A SILVER PIECE

Since silversmithing by hand has not changed during the course of many centuries, to a very great extent the slides will show virtually the methods used by colonial silversmiths here in America, and for that reason, I have added at the end of the technical slides, a few significant slides of important examples of colonial silver.

There was little silver ore mined in America during the colonial period,

(*Continued on page* 192)

Classify Your Collections

By WILLIAM B. SPRAGUE

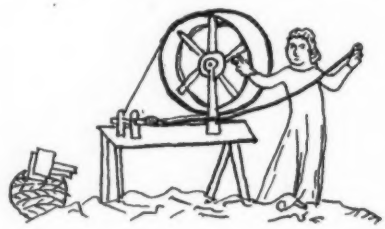
[This manuscript, found among the author's papers after his death, is an excellent summation of his own thinking relative to Early American Industries.]

Having gathered a certain amount of material, the problem of classification immediately presents itself to the collector of early American industries. The late Dr. Henry C. Mercer, who almost single-handed gathered and housed the superb collection of the Bucks County Historical Society at Doylestown, Pa., prepared and printed in 1921 an elaborate chart which attempted to classify and sub-classify tools according to the finished product which they were designed to manufacture or the purpose which they were intended to accomplish under the headings: Shelter, Clothing, Food, Transportation, etc. While logical in a certain measure, this would obviously be unsatisfactory for exhibition purposes, as in many cases it would widely separate trades which were more or less allied and in which almost the same implements were used. For example, the shoemaker would belong under Clothing and the harness maker under Transportation, whereas these two workmen could actually occupy the same shop conveniently and, with comparatively few specialized exceptions, use the same set of tools. Many similar instances could be cited, and indeed the scheme is not carried out at Doylestown to any great extent. Edward H. Knights' *American Mechanical Dictionary*, published in 1874 (page 2593), contains a proposed classification according to the exact function of the tool, whether cutting, perforating, percussion, etc., but for exhibition purposes these would result in a hopeless jumble, each class including tools of many different artisans with no actual relation whatever. It

therefore seems that with respect to manufactures, tools should be grouped so far as possible, according to the *material* with which the work was done. Thus *woodworking* includes the carpenter, the wheelwright, the cooper, the turner, the cabinet maker, the coachmaker, the millwright and shipwright; *metal working* includes blacksmith, founder, tinsmith, coopersmith, pewterer, brazier, plumber, goldbeater; *leather working*, the tanner, the currier, the saddler and harnessmaker, the shoemaker and glover; *textiles*, the preparation and spinning of flax, and wool, weaving, frilling, and the manufacture of garments and other articles from cloth. So far as manufactures are concerned these seem to be the four large sub-classes, but there are many other trades which do not readily fit into any larger group:—comb making (from horn), felt hat making (from fur), broom making (from broom corn), etc.

Next to manufactures, the second principal class is *farming*, subdivided into agriculture, care and use of livestock, and dairy products. The third principal class is *housekeeping*, consisting of kitchen, dining room, laundry, bedroom and general housekeeping equipment. A fourth principal class, for which no sufficiently comprehensive name has suggested itself includes lighting, heating, refrigeration, water supply, motive power and weights and measures. Fifthly, possibly a *miscellaneous* class contains implements pertaining to health, amusement, education, crime, toilet, science, and the like.

Several of the larger museums, in their endeavor to show the entire history of a particular industry, seek to acquire everything pertaining to that industry up to the present, and will continue to add modern items as soon as they threaten to become obsolete,—not an attractive or feasible plan for the ordinary collector. From the standpoint of general interest, it seems logical, in the case of each particular industry, to adopt the approximate date when machinery took the place of hand work for quantity production. For example, the machine for making felt from fur came into practical operation about 1850, before which time the hatters employed for this purpose the strangest and most primitive implements such as had been used for hundreds of years. In the culinary line, open fire cooking, for which most of the hand-made implements were used, gave way to stoves before 1830, and there is little of interest after that date, unless one has a fancy for the ingenious factory-made "gadgets"—apple parers, cherry seeders, flour sifters, and the like—of which there were a great variety patented and manufactured in the 1860's and 1870's—principally, it is said, for catchpennies at county fairs. Although the patent office was opened in 1802, the writer has not noticed anything bearing the *date* of a patent before 1850, and invariably articles, marked simply "Patented" with the name of the patentee, have the appearance of an earlier date. In the sporting field a bicycle of the



Spynyng Wheel

1860's, being the first *pedalled* vehicle to be used in this country, seems sufficiently interesting to be shown.

Moreover, the size and character of objects to be included must depend on the facilities which the individual may have for gathering and accommodating them. Few ordinary citizens can go in for saw mills, cider presses, or even the larger agricultural machinery to any large extent, for lack of space. One whose headquarters are inland will hardly consider it practical to assemble a marine exhibit, especially whaling material, as this is naturally found only in the coastal areas, and is usually held at high prices. Firearms and lighting devices are obtainable in unlimited variety, and the general collection of implements can scarcely do more with these lines than attempt a representative showing of typical examples. Delicately made scientific instruments appeal strongly to some and not at all to others, who may confine themselves to crude things home-made by comparatively unskilled workers with primitive tools.

All of which is merely to illustrate that it is not practical to fix a hard and fast dividing line between the collectable and the non-collectable and that everyone must be guided by his own interests, tastes and circumstances.

More About Spinning Wheels

By Rudolf P. Hommel

It is unfortunate that the literature of our colonial times took spinning with or without a wheel for granted and rarely referred to it or described the process or the utensils. There are many questions one would like to have answered and it takes research along devious paths to gain the desired information.

To begin with, it is helpful to establish a terminology and fix dates for the occurrence of certain implements connected with spinning. This we can do with the aid of Murray's *New English Dictionary*. While the quotations there refer primarily to old England, they create a background which was equally that of the Anglo-Saxons and the Celts who emigrated to our shores.

As early as 1404 (Nottingham Rec. II, 22) a "spynyng wheel" is mentioned. This we may assume was a hand-turned wheel such as is pictured in an early 14th century manuscript in the British Museum, and copied for our illustration.

Spinning wheels were used first in the Far East and came to England via continental Europe. There the German called a spinning wheel a "rad", influenced by the Latin "rota". This is reflected in an inventory of 1418 in Bury Wills: "j rot j par de cardes" (one wheel and one pair of cards).

The next reference we quote is of importance. In 1475, (Maldon Court Rolls, Bundle 49, No. 8), it was deemed necessary to describe a spinning wheel, as turned by hand: "one spynnyng whele in manu servientis." The inference is cogent that by that time a spinning wheel turned *other than* by hand had been invented, which, of course, would be the treadle wheel.

Wheel and cards are mentioned together *circa* 1525: "Item j qwele, j par of karyds," and often thenceforth, in the most fantastic spelling.

The Shuttleworth's Accounts of 1617 precisely recorded that a spinning wheel for the cook's wife cost 2 shillings, 4 pence. This must have been a new one, and probably made to order, while old ones, as often inventoried in estates, were valued for much less. For instance, in 1525 a wheel, cards and a rackancrook were given a valuation of 12 pence. The

rackancrook, by the way, had nothing to do with spinning; it was the hook suspended from the rannle-balk.

The rock, or spin-rock (mentioned in 1483, 1623, and 1648) is the distaff ("rocken" in German). Spinning upon the rock, or upon the distaff means merely spinning, most likely by the perambulating spinner with a spindle, and the distaff thrust in the belt or carried under the arm.

A reference of 1688 to Holme, Armoury III. 286/2, has this: "Woll is principally, nay only spun at it, and none of the other sorts of wheels." By that time, a few years after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes (1685), when more than 50,000 Huguenot families fled from France, the development of the spinning wheel had progressed to such an extent that one could speak of "other sorts of wheels."

It is clear then that any of the colonists coming to our shores in the seventeenth century, were they English, Irish, Dutch or German, could have brought treadle wheels with them, and most likely did.

We know that the clergy in Massachusetts, catering to the spiritual and temporal needs of the receding Indians, put their women to spinning on the wheel. In 1661 the Company for the Propagation of the Gospel among the Heathen Nations of New England sent their yearly accounts to the Corporation in London and in it occurs this interesting item:

"To wheel, Cards and Cotton Wool to employ the Indian Women at the vineyards, to be kept as a common Stock for them 10/00/00." The vineyards referred to Martha's Vineyard. To judge from prices prevailing at the time, ten pounds sterling could buy a goodly number of wheels and cards. Our authority for this mention of spinning wheels in 1661 is Hazard's *Historical Collections*, Vol. 2.

A word should be said about the persistence of the wool wheel apart from the flaxwheel. There must be a fundamental difference between spinning wool-like fibres such as animal wool or cotton, and the spinning of long fibres such as flax which need not be rolled into rovings for manipulation. It is significant that cotton — as if to emphasize its relationship to animal wool — was originally called "cotton-wool" by the English, and "tree - wool" ("baum - wolle") by the Germans.

The bobbin and flyer is the distinguishing feature of the flax wheel. It is documented in Germany in 1480 (Hausbuch of the Waldburg Family). Leonardo da Vinci, the great theoretical inventor, did not invent it, but sketched it *circa* 1500 and added his invention, an ingenious yarn distributor. It was almost three hundred years later when John Antes (or Antis) at the Moravian town of Fulneck, in Yorkshire, England, re-invented a yarn distributor which moved the bobbin back and forth. This did away with the necessity of periodically moving the yarn from hook to hook on the flyer and stopping the wheel to do so.

From all the facts at my command it seems that the bobbin and flyer was the very contrivance which made the spinning of flax on a wheel at all possible. The wool wheel is much too swift, and not practicable for the slower flax spinning. A wool wheel in my possession turns the spindle 52 times with one revolution of the large wheel. Contrasted to that, my Castle wheel, with one revolution, turns the bobbin 17 times and the flyer 15 times. Another ordinary low, slanting-bench flax wheel turned the bobbin 18 times and the flyer 13 times with one revolution of the wheel.

When the Salzburger emigrants settled near Savannah in Georgia they brought with them their flax spinning wheels. In 1739, they planted cotton and found that their slow treadle wheel was not suitable for spinning cotton. Resourceful as they were, they found a way out. The Salzburger diary of 15th February, 1740, relates: "A large, light wheel was made, similar to the wool wheel used in Germany, upon which the women spin the cotton and accomplish much more than with the small wheel which is turned with the treadle. The clockmaker, Frederick Mueller, a skillful mechanic, makes these large wheels for the people."

The fundamental difference between cotton and wool spinning on the one hand and flax spinning on the other is also exemplified in the development of spinning machines. In 1810, when cotton and wool spinning machines had been fully developed and were already in extensive use, the problem of flax spinning by machinery had not been solved. In that year Napoleon offered a prize of one million francs for the invention of such a machine.

Cheese Making

Cheese is made by adding rennet (obtained from the stomach of the calf) to make it curdle, after which the curds, wrapped in cheese cloth, were placed in a *cheesebasket*, resting on a *cheese ladder* (or tings), over any set of receptacle, for the further drawing of the whey. Sometimes, this drawing process was assisted by "breaking" the curds in a curd grinder, although these crude little machines are rarely seen. The curds, still in the cloth, were then placed in a *cheese hoop* of the desired size, resting on the *draw board* of the *cheese press*. The *folla* was then placed on top of the curds, and the pressure applied and renewed from day to day, until practically all moisture had been expelled. The cheese was covered with several coatings of butter to preserve it, and was occasionally artificially colored and flavored.

Although cheese in the United States was universally home-made up to about 1850, by 1880 more than 80 per cent of it was made in factories.

The efforts of the English from 1632 on to establish in Ireland the cultivation of flax was due to the desire to rid England of the domination of the Hanseatic League (1150-1669) which for centuries had controlled the market and supplied flax and linen produced on the continent. By that time the processes of flax spinning and its implement, the treadle wheel with bobbin and flyer, were fully developed and all the Scotch-Irish could do was to adopt the methods and spin for the English market.

When they emigrated to the American colonies, some went to Massachusetts and thence to New Hampshire *circa* 1718-19, others to Pennsylvania as early as 1716. If it is true that the Castle wheel was a creation of the Irish, then we may assume that it was introduced into Pennsylvania by them. Castle wheels are found there, now and then.

Silver Making

(Continued from page 189)

and very little imported. However, starting about the middle of the seventeenth century, when the colonies opened up trade with the West Indies and Europe, coins of various types did flow into the colonies, and since there were no banks or stock markets, of course, the thing to do then was to invest in coins and have them converted into some useful form,—not only useful, but something to provide for a rainy day.

Therefore, it was not so much, actually, the presence of silversmiths which encouraged people to have silver made in the form of plate for their cupboards and tables, as it was the presence of coins which made silversmiths practically a necessity in the colonies, and we come to the first slide with that in view.

[Slide] This shows the coins as they had been brought to the silversmith for melting down into some handy form,—to be converted into something satisfying and useful. Here you see the crucible set on a charcoal fire with the coins waiting to be melted. The coins that went into this pot were rather varied. They came from at least a half-dozen countries whose standards of silver were rather different one from the other. In America, there was no rigid standard of control, as was exercised by the Worshipful Company of Goldsmiths in England, and there is no exact proof what standard was used by the colonial silversmiths; it probably varied. It seems very likely, however, that they observed something pretty close to sterling, since they advertised their wares as equal to the best imported from England, and the silversmiths themselves were men of high integrity and leaders in their community. As a matter of fact, I have tested one example and found it to be higher than sterling, which is a fair indication that the quality was consistently high.

[Slide] Nowadays, refiners supply silver in the sheet or by the ingot, which can be worked on, but the colonial silversmith had to provide this for himself. After he refined his metal to the point that he wanted, he poured it into a mold such as you see here, with vents at three or four corners, to provide outlets for the steam. In this way, the silver metal was reduced—

[Slide]—to a state convenient to work with, and here you see an ingot emerging from the mold. This, of course, in order to be the proper gauge had to be pounded out or rolled out, probably by a group of sweating apprentices, who did such menial work.

[Slide] Once he had achieved the proper thickness and smoothness of the plate, he cut it with a pair of shears as you see in the left foreground, to a reasonable size, and then took a pattern of the piece he was going to make and traced it on the sheet. Since silver spreads in the making, it was necessary to make the finished circle, for the bowl that this was going to be, somewhat less than the combined measurements of the height and diameter of the finished vessel.

[Slide] Since nine-tenths of colonial silver was hammered out, raised from a solid sheet, rather than seamed along the side, raising is probably the most important aspect of the subject, and here we see a sheet, like the one we just saw, being subjected to the initial process, which frequently meant setting it in a block in which there were various sized hollows and hammering into it with a rather large, heavy, round-faced hammer.

You can see the various bowls that might have been started from the various sized hollows. You will also notice, as we go along, the hammers used for these various processes are different from one step to another. They do serve different purposes,—but some people use one for one purpose and some use another for the same purpose, very much as a man may favor a certain golf club.

[Slide] The initial step in the raising can be seen in this comparison of the preliminary sheet and the piece as it emerges from the hollowing block, which, of course, is very rough indeed. Hollow ware today is frequently stamped out by heavy machines, but the colonial silversmith had to resort to his hammering on a variety of anvils.

[Slide] Frequently, in raising a piece, it is necessary to subject it to the procedure you notice here, which consists of putting it on a T-shaped, fluted anvil and hammering crimps or flutes in the edges, which tend to equalize the various stresses set up by the hammering and prevent the metal from splitting. It is necessary to see that the metal does not crease or it will split, or if it doesn't split, it will be very difficult to get the creases out. It is merely a method of fluting the metal evenly throughout the entire rim, and you notice here that the hammer has been changed to a thinner one which fits into the groove of the anvil or stake, as it is called.

[Slide] This is a different step in the same procedure, carried a little bit further, showing the silversmith working from the base, which has been preserved in the original plate, and continuing his fluting completely around the edge on the anvil just described.

[Slide] Once that has been accomplished, it is necessary, of course, to take out those flutes, and this he does by changing his hammer once again, and in this case, changing his anvil to something flat, by which means he starts straightening out the flutes from the bottom to the top, rather than from the top to the bottom, because in so doing, he encourages the direction of the metal toward the final shape that he is trying to achieve.

[Slide] Once the flutes have been straightened out, you can see that the bowl starts to take on some semblance of its final shape, although I might add that this probably represents several successive flutings and straightenings, since in no one course or circuit of the bowl,is the diameter reduced by much more than a half-inch. He has probably fluted and straightened this at least three or four times before arriving at the shape that you see here.

[Slide] (This, incidentally, is going to take the form of a porringer bowl or something very close to it, with a turned rim, as you will note.) Once he has achieved the ultimate bulge of this shape, he starts drawing in the top, the first step being repeated flutings and raising. In this case, he has controlled the bulge, brought it up to a straight line and is hammering it out flat, with the hammer that we noticed in the same process further back.

[Slide] Once that bulge has been controlled and directed inward, he has to take an entirely different set of tools. The flat stake is not adequate for this particular purpose, and you will see in the lower foreground a variety of small stakes with rounded heads and different contours that can be used for this purpose. He has chosen one that approximates the shape that he is trying to arrive at under the hammer, and with a round-faced hammer, he starts pounding the metal in to conform to the curve of the anvil underneath, or, by shifting

the position of the porringer, to reach the curve he desires at that time.

[Slide] The bulge being controlled, he next starts to turn it in. Finally he wants to make the little straight rim that appears on the edge of the bowl, and for this, of course, he has to take an entirely different stake or anvil. He uses a hammer with a longer surface, a so-called "collet hammer," with which he beats around the very rim of the porringer in order to finish it off to approximately the final shape.

[Slide] However, during the whole time, he has allowed the base to remain pretty much as it was when he started, and because of the stresses in hammering, it is a rather uneven proposition at the present moment. Once again, he shifts both the stake and the hammer and takes, in this case, what is called a "bottom stake," which might be one of a variety of stakes, all perfectly flat and of varying sizes according to the piece to be made. He beats and straightens out the base until it arrives at its final flatness. It is an extremely difficult procedure, I understand, and one which is by no means capable of being done the first time in a satisfactory manner, especially on broad surfaces such as trays and salvers. In this particular case, of course, the bottom stake itself is approximately the same size as the bottom of the porringer bowl, and consequently, it is not quite as difficult as it might have been.

[Slide] Here is what he has arrived at through these various steps, but I might say that not all the steps have been shown — such as finishing the bowl, that is, taking it out of the rough state by planishing, by rubbing over with pumice and rouge, and finally the burnishing of the piece with an agate or a steel tool. We arrive at a shape which can be considered final.

As a summary of this, I would like to show you the various stages which you have just seen this piece go through, starting with a flat piece of metal, the flutes put in, you can see that the sides have been turned up considerably in the second fluting, which completes the circuit of the bowl. He starts to flatten out and straighten out the flutes in this step. Here, they are all flattened out and the rim is turned up considerably further. This represents still another illustration of the succession of flutings and flattenings; again, flutings and flattenings, almost a boring repetition, although it is more fun to do than to talk about. Here the sides of the bowl are straightened out in order to bring in the bulge and turn it in, and finally, with the polishing and planishing, arrives in the end the finished product.

[Slide] The procedure for other forms is practically the same. Here is a potential coffee pot, a rather deep one, and you can see exactly the same steps being taken here. A number of flutings and straightenings have already been accomplished and he has reached the ultimate bulge that he wants for the base of the pot and he is starting to bring in the neck of the vessel to narrow it down to the proper size. In this particular step he has started the fluting which he will straighten out by hammering up from the base line.

[Slide] You can see here particularly the rough hammer marks that are left by this constant succession of hammerings, and which finally have to be removed, of course, in the finished piece.

[Slide] Here, once again, the hammer marks are very plain. He has succeeded in controlling the outward bulge, and has now started to draw in the neck.

[Slide] To do that, of course, he avoids fluting the bottom part, which has been established as his preliminary curve for the piece, and merely flutes the upper part, which he will proceed to straighten.

[Slide] Drawing in the neck, he has achieved something like this, which is approximately the final shape of the coffee pot.

[Slide] Here is the piece after it has been shaped, with some slight embossing done in the base, and a lid added. The planishing has removed all the rough hammer marks that you saw in the last few steps. But planishing does not exactly remove them. The planishing hammer merely smooths them out to a point where they are evenly distributed, and these are never absolutely removed from a hand-made piece of silver even by the following process, the polishing up of the piece with rouge and with the burnishing tool. It smooths them down and flattens them out, but they always remain as subtle little facets on the final piece, which accounts to a certain degree for the interesting color of old silver, reflecting light as it does from so many angles.

[Slide] Another phase of silversmithing which also contributes to its charm is the necessity for annealing the metal. As the silversmith went along as he hammered the piece, the hammering set up a great many stresses and strains which had to be eliminated. Consequently, during the entire process of hammering, these strains must be eliminated by annealing. A process that adds color to the metal. Nowadays, of course, there are gas torches which can direct heat at any given spot where it is desired. The colonial silversmith had to do this in another way. Here he has placed his bowl on the fire in order to bring it up to the desired heat to release those tensions and make the piece malleable enough to carry the procedure one step further. This particular piece in the formation, happens to be a typical early eighteenth century New York bowl with panels.

[Slide] Here you can see the bowl in a further step. The shape has been established and decoration has been started. In this particular case, the chased lines divide the bowl into six different panels, put in by means of the little chasing hammer, and one of any number of chasing punches which are used for the purpose. There are silversmiths who have upwards of a thousand such punches, of different contour but all rounded and fairly blunt so that they will not cut through the surface of the silver itself. The bowl, meanwhile, is set on a sandbag or cushion to protect it from the shock of the hammer blow.

[Slide] The chasing itself does not cut through the surface, as I said, but merely dents it. As a consequence, on the inside of the piece, the design, if it is performed with sufficient vigor, is repeated in reverse. This is the finished product — a bowl like that you just saw, only this one happens to have been made about 228 years ago here in New York by Kierstede, and now in the Metropolitan Museum. You can also see the chasing, in this particular instance, it being a very elaborate bowl, is not the final decoration itself, but consists merely of lines pronounced and bolder embossed decoration which I think you can see better on the outside of the bowl.

[Slide] This is the finished product, and I think it is probably more spectacular and interesting than any other of these bowls. The silversmith, working on the inside with embossing hammers and tools, beat up into bold contour these various floral elements,

and then, leaving the bowl very much in the rough, he took his chasing tools from the outside and followed along his outline, to give definition to the leaves and the various elements of the flowers and the tendrils that he has worked into the side. Working from the inside on a shallow bowl like this is one thing; it is fairly easy, it is a very simple matter to get at it. But if you had a deep coffee pot, for instance, working on the inside is something entirely different.

[Slide] It had to be accomplished by remote control. For instance, in this chocolate pot by Winslow, which is also in the Metropolitan Museum, in order to get these grooved embossings on the base since no hammer or tool would adequately reach in there, it was necessary to work it on what is called a "snarling iron," which is a long z-shaped iron, one end of which is rigid and is held outside, the other end being inserted inside the form of the pot itself. By striking against the outside iron with a hammer, the percussion was transmitted along the bar to the end that was inside the coffee pot, thereby raising these flutes along the side which you see here. Then, finally, the silversmith once again went from the outside with his chasing tools to give difinition and to even it up and make the finished product which you see here.

There is one interesting phase of this pot which I do not think has ever been mentioned before, and it struck me as very curious. It is an early example,—it must date very close to seventeen hundred,—and coffee, chocolate and tea, and the vessels that were used for the service of those drinks, were not very well known. Just how to serve them was rather a problem, and how to make vessels in which to serve them was still another problem. Later on, it became customary to cast the spout in prepared molds for that purpose. I do not know any early American silver of this period, however, which has a cast spout. In this piece which we are speaking of, it was raised very much in the same way that we saw the bowls being raised before. But to establish the curve at the base of the spout was rather a difficult problem, and Winslow took advantage of an ingenious method to do it. You will notice here that he has apparently placed a long strip of metal which he used for the spout into a spoon mold and hammered it out to establish the essential curve of the spout itself. If you are familiar with seventeenth and early eighteenth century spoons, you will notice that this particular part is an exact replica of a Winslow spoon, which can be seen over at the Metropolitan Museum in the case next to this pot. It is a sort of Yankee trick, adapting simple means to rather finished results.

[Slide] The moldings that you see on these various pieces were often made by drawing thin strips of metal, silver, through set dies by means of a winch on what is called a "draw bench." They are rather inconspicuous little features which, because they are so small, are rather difficult to analyze. Cass Gilbert, the late architect, once made a series of drawings of moldings on typical pieces of silver in the Clearwater Collection in the Metropolitan Museum, and he showed, as you can see in these slides, that not only in their contour but in the sequence of their contours, the moldings themselves are accurate replicas of the moldings which appear on classical architecture. Undoubtedly, in order to file their dies to the proper contour, the silversmiths took advantage of the books on architecture which were circulated at the time, and they are actually jewelers' miniatures of architectural moldings in that period.

[Slide] For the most part, of course, early American silver is extremely simple, intended primarily for storage and for useful purposes. However, the silversmith occasionally would have a commission to perform something very elaborate, and that he was capable of it I think is indicated by this sugar box made by Edward Winslow of Boston, now owned by Yale University. It is one of the most elaborate pieces of American silver known and just goes to prove that, given a chance or given any reason for so doing, they could accomplish something which was equal to the more elaborate work being done in Europe in the period.

[Slide] From the point of view of the design (in this final slide)—colonial silver was not new in the sense that it created anything startlingly novel. But in the manner in which it took inherited and borrowed ideas and combined them in new combinations, the colonial silversmith sometimes really arrived at startling contributions to design, as in this tankard by Soumain, who was a Huguenot silversmith working in New York in the early eighteenth century. He has reduced a variety of ideas which were apparently in use throughout Europe and combined them in such a fashion that he arrived at a product which was purely American, or purely New York for that matter, and a rather startling evolution in design. The bowl and the sweetmeat box that you saw earlier were about the same thing, purely American, but not quite so typical as this.

To show what he has done, I would like to point out that the form of the tankard itself was one that was borrowed from Charles the Second tankards, with very little elaboration or difference. It was customary, in the Germanic countries, to decorate the lids of vessels with either heavy engraving or medals. This little trick was borrowed by the New York silversmiths to a great extent. Also, typical of Scandinavian silverwork, were the decorations which provided the handle with a grip and gave decoration as well. In this particular instance, it is rather interesting to notice that the New York silversmiths who were not sculptors in any sense of the word, chose another rather ingenious method of providing this decoration, by taking the gilt mounts of French clocks and furniture mounts, and making a silver casting of them for applisation to a silver tankard.

At the base of the handle we find a repetition of the same thing which was taken from the same furniture mount, a gilt mount of the Louis IV period. Here, the floral designs which are applied and stamped around the base in a little strip, are a typical reminder of the same decorations used in Holland, although in Holland, the tankard itself was practically unknown. Most ornamental patterns, as a matter of fact, start as something serviceable. They themselves date back to the time when silver mountings usually enclosed a vessel of another substance, either a shell or stoneware or something of the sort. But even though the need for using a foreign substance within the silver had passed, they continued to use these little clips, purely for ornament, much as the whip-stand was perpetuated beyond any usefulness in the first automobiles, which you can see down in Radio Center. So you have English, Dutch, French and Scandinavian influences combining to produce an essentially American contribution to design.

(*Continued on page* 197)

Early American Industries Association

Early American Industries Association Inc.

WARREN C. LANE, President,
74 Front St., Worcester, Mass.

WALLACE K. BROWN, Vice-President,
7 Warren Place, Montclair, N. J.

CHARLES RUFUS HARTE, Secretary,
28 W. Elm St., New Haven, Conn.

GEORGE M. SIMMONS, Treasurer,
Richmondville, N. Y.

J. EARLE BACON, Chair., Recruiting Com., 113 Keene St., Providence,R.I.

J. D. HATCH, JR., Editor pro-tem.,
125 Washington Ave., Albany, N. Y.

Communications should be addressed as follows: Pertaining to the *contents* of THE CHRONICLE to Mr. Hatch. Suggestions for prospective members to Mr. Bacon. Other matters, to Mr. Lane. Addresses as here given.

Printed by Case the Printer,
(Henry A. Mayer),
135-29 40*th Road, Flushing, N.Y.*

Our Purpose

The purpose of the corporation is educational, to encourage the study and better understanding of early American industry, in the home, in the shop, on the farm, and on the sea, and especially to discover, identify, classify, preserve and exhibit obsolete tools, implements, utensils, instruments, vehicles, appliances and mechanical devices used by American craftsmen, farmers, housewives, mariners, professional men and other workers.

Dues

The annual dues are payable January 1st, beginning 1943, and are as follows: Regular members, $1.00; Contributing members, $2.00; Supporting members, $5.00; Sustaining members, $10.00 and up. There is no distinction between the classes, except the amount of dues, but the publication of THE CHRONICLE cannot be financed unless a considerable number of the members pay more than $1.00. Each member is expected to voluntarily place himself in the class which represents the amount he is willing to contribute to the support of the Association for the current year. Life membership costs $50.00. THE CHRONICLE is sent to all members without additional charge. Many of the back numbers may be secured from the Treasurer for from 20c up, according to the supply on hand, and a twelve-page index to the twenty-four numbers of Volume I, containing a useful bibliography, for $1.00 each. For further information, address any of the officers.

William B. Sprague

On August 22nd the Association lost one of its strongest members—our founder and first President, and long time Editor of THE CHRONICLE, William Buell Sprague. In one sense Mr. Sprague could, indeed, be said to *be* the Association as a review of his work with Early American Industries is a review of the first nine years of the life of the organization.

The first and founding meeting was held, "due to Mr. Sprague's individual effort," at Wiggins' Old Tavern in Northampton on August 31st, 1933. As the record further indicates, it was composed of "a group of men and women interested in preserving for posterity the tools and implements used by our forefathers in maintaining life, as well as forming the adjuncts of life, now so sought by antiquarians." There were sixteen people present and Mr. Sprague suggested that the names of four others interested who had sent regrets be also noted.

Mr. Sprague was, on the motion of Mr. A. B. Wells, made "Chairman of the meeting and eventually of any Association which might be formed." Volume I. Number 1 of THE CHRONICLE, which records the above, and also the objectives of the new Association, was issued, with S. C. Wolcott as Editor, on November 20th, 1933.

In the third issue of THE CHRONICLE, printed the following year, in March of 1934, Mr. Sprague, still Chairman, was listed as "Assistant Editor" to Mr. Wolcott. The Association had grown rapidly; Mr. Sprague's idea had become immediately popular. In six months the Association had grown to include one hundred and thirty-four members.

With the unexpected death of Mr. Wolcott, only three months later in 1934, Mr. Sprague assumed the Editorship of THE CHRONICLE, continuing also as President. He was succeeded by Mr. Wiggins in this latter office in 1938.

Nineteen thirty-eight also saw the establishment of the first chapter of the Association. This was called together as a regional group in New Jersey by Wallace K. Brown, and was appropriately titled, after the Association's founder, "Sprague Chapter Number 1."

Mr. Sprague was not only Editor of THE CHRONICLE, but its major contributor as well. In this work, as Editor and as the writer of many articles on the early American crafts, he set a standard which has made THE CHRONICLE a major source of reliable information on our early handicraft industries. THE CHRONICLE has become an invaluable reference source for libraries, museums and students. Back issues of many of its numbers have been unobtainable for some time and many libraries are today seeking missing issues in order to complete their files.

The range of Mr. Sprague's interest and studies is shown in the titles of his articles which have appeared in THE CHRONICLE, and a list of which we print here: The Brush Maker, Butter Churns, Clay Tobacco Pipes, The Comb Maker, The Cork Cutter, The Cooper, Early American Manufacture of Felt Hats, The File Maker, Flax Dressing by Hand, The Glove Maker, The Parchment Maker, The Pin Maker, The Rope Maker, The Straw Hat Maker, Tanner and the Currier, The Tailor, The Wool Comber, and The Wool Spinner. The list has, it will be noticed, a definite relation to his last article on the classification of Early American Industry collections. This, which was found among material he was preparing for printing at the time of his death, is published in this issue as his final contribution.

His activities as a collector are also revealed in the notice, one among several, listed in the first issue of THE CHRONICLE. This reads: "W. B. Sprague, 43 Cedar St., New York City, collects farming and trade tools, and is especially interested in tools of the unusual and lesser known trades. He has a printed circular describing his wants in detail, which he will mail to anyone on request. He has, for exchange or sale, some 200 duplicates, and articles not in his line, and will be glad to give details to anyone who will indicate what line he is interested in."

Friends and members will be glad to learn that just prior to his death, Mr. Sprague arranged for the transfer of his collection as a unit to the Industrial and Farm Museum being created at Cooperstown, New York.

Annual Meeting

The annual meeting of the Early American Industries Association was held this year at Worcester, Massachusetts, on September 18th and 19th. The program, planned for two days, was a new and successful departure by our President, Mr. Wall. Eighty-three registered as attending the meeting and others from Worcester and nearby communities greatly increased the total in attendance at each session.

Meetings and registration, held at the Worcester Art Museum, were preceded on Friday afternoon by a meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Association.

On the first afternoon addresses were given by Mary Earle Gould, on "From Pantry Boxes to a Book," and by Zelotes W. Coombs. Miss Gould's talk was augmented by an excellent display of woodenware in the gallery near the auditorium. Professor Coomb's, in his discussion on "Early American Industries as Factors in American Democracy," gave an inspiring justification for the study and collecting of Early American Industries.

Members in the late afternoon were guests at a tea given by the Worcester Museum, which also gave them the opportunity to view the large exhibit of Contemporary British Arts and Crafts being shown in the museum.

The Association held a formal dinner that evening at the Bancroft Hotel, at which the Hon. William A. Bennett, Mayor of Worcester, spoke briefly, and Warren C. Lane more at length on "Collecting—A Liberal Education." Mr. Lane illustrated his talk with examples from his own collection of American bottles and flasks.

Saturday morning, again at the Worcester Art Museum, Miss Marion W. Emerson spoke on "Hearts and Darts—Early American," giving a history of the early valentine industry of Worcester, and Louisa Dresser, of the Worcester Museum, gave an illustrated survey on early portrait painting in New England.

At noon the members were tendered a splendid lunch in the Worcester Pressed Steel Company, by John W. Higgins, President of the Company, who welcomed his guests in cordial and informal manner and provided an opportunity for all to see his company in operation while proceeding to the John W. Higgins Armory museum for the afternoon meeting. The extensive armor collection and examples of pressed steel Mr. Higgins keeps for the benefit of visitors and for his craftsmen.

In the business meeting of the Association which followed, a resolution was adopted on the death of the Association's Editor, William B. Sprague (printed on this page). Mr. Hatch as Secretary gave an informal report and a further report as Treasurer, showing a balance on hand of $203.84 after costs of Incorporation and the establishing of a new system of addressograph plates for mailing had been deducted.

The President explained the Incorporation of the Association, which had been reported in the April issue of THE CHRONICLE, and the meeting adopted a unanimous vote of approval of the action taken. The President further explained that an entire slate of officers and directors should be adopted at the meeting, existing officers and trustees having served temporarily pending the first regular meeting of the Association. He regretted his inability to continue as President for reasons of health. The offices of Secretary and Treasurer, on the recommendation of Mr. Hatch, were divided into two separate positions; and the directors of the Association were divided into terms of 3, 2, and 1 years, to permit a rotation and an election each year of ten of the Directors. After the adoption of this latter plan the following report of the Nominations Committee was adopted unanimously.

President—Warren C. Lane, 74 Front St., Worcester, Mass.

Vice-President—Wallace K. Brown, 7 Warren Place, Montclair, N. J.

Secretary—Charles Rufus Harte, 28 West Elm St., New Haven, Conn.

Treasurer — George M. Simmons, Richmondville, N. Y.

Directors 3 years—Charles E. Ayers, 1 West St., Worcester, Mass.; J. Earle Bacon, 113 Keene St., Providence, R. I.; Wallace K. Brown, 7 Warren Place, Montclair, N. J.; Edward Durell, c/o Fork & Hoe Co., Columbus, Ohio; Charles Rufus Harte, 28 West Elm St., New Haven, Conn.; John W. Higgins, 100 Barber Ave., Worcester, Mass.; Bertram K. Little, 305 Warren St., Brookline, Mass.; Newton C. Brainard, P. O. Drawer 538, Hartford, Conn.; Carroll Palmer, Plainfield, N. J.; Lewis N. Wiggins, Hotel Northampton, Northampton, Mass.

Directors: 2 years—Dr. C. C. Adams, New York State Museum, Albany, N. Y.; Mrs. Theodore Bailey, 21 East 94th Street, New York City; John M. Connor, 842 East Front St., Plainfield, N. J.; Allan Eaton, Russell Sage Foundation, New York City; Ralph F. Flanders, Box 477, Springfield, Vt.; John Davis Hatch, Jr., Albany Institute of History and Art, Albany, N. Y.; Loring McMillen, 226 Fairview Ave., Port

(Continued on page 198)

Resolution

At its Annual Meeting in Worcester the Association adopted the following resolution on the death of Mr. Sprague:

"WHEREAS, the members of this Association feel a keen sense of personal loss through the death of their friend, William B. Sprague, and,

"WHEREAS, the Association as a corporate body believes that it owes its very existence to him as one of the founding members and its status as a national institution chiefly to his foresight in establishing and his great knowledge in editing THE CHRONICLE, and

"WHEREAS, though we know the futility of lamenting the loss of a friend or regretting the organizing ability and vigorous administration of an officer of the Association, yet we desire to record our feeble appreciation of an associate, a leader, a counselor and a learned man who has gone from us, Therefore,

"BE IT RESOLVED by the Early American Industries Association that it pay tribute to the memory of William B. Sprague by standing in silence at its annual meeting, that it see to the completion of the second volume of THE CHRONICLE as a memorial to him, that these resolutions be included in the minutes of the Association and printed in THE CHRONICLE."

Early American Industries Association

Membership

Membership lists should be amended as follows: ((N) indicates new member, (S) indicates non-member subscriber, (ch) indicates change of address, (D) indicates decease, (R) indicates resignation, (cr) indicates correction.

CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles: 1395, Mr. Ransom Mathews, Editor Horseless Carriage Club, c/o Los Angeles Museum (N)

CONNECTICUT

Clintonville: 150, Elmer D. Kieth, R. D. No. 1 (ch)
New Haven: 1363, John Marshall Phillips to Librarian Fine Arts Library, Yale Univ. (ch)

MAINE

North Bridgeton: 417, Edwin V. Spooner (ch)

MASSACHUSETTS

Beverly: 157, Christian Lants, 73 Lothrop St. (ch)
Blandford: 1244, Alexander H. Wing, Jr. (ch)
Brookline: 1378, Aloha Camps, Mrs. Edward L. Gulick, 591 Washington St. (S)
Lowell: 1186, Mrs. H. S. Nichols (R)
Medford: 777, Rebecca H. Robbins (R)
Millbury: 1389, Miss Laribel Armsby, 35 Main St. (N)
Salem: 91, Willis H. Ropes, 159 Federal St. (ch)
West Boylston: 1393, Miss Ethel A. Hatch
West Springfield: 1061, Mrs. Abbott R. Todd, 145 Harwich Rd. (ch)
Worcester: 1087, American Antiquarian Society, Salisbury St. (cr)

NEW HAMPSHIRE

Fitzwilliam: 225, Charles E. Ayers (ch)

NEW JERSEY

Glen Ridge: 1386, Hilray F. Bryan, 27 Oakwood Ave. (N)
Jersey City: 321, 1175, Dr. and Mrs. H. Sheridan Baketel, 155 Van Wagenen Ave. (ch)
Montclair: 1387, H. P. Smith, 7 Waterbury Rd. (N)
Newark: 1360, Francis W. Bilodeau, c/o Newark Museum (ch)
Summit: 1385, Hunter Ross, Hanley Court (N)
Trenton: 1388, New Jersey State Museum (S); 1380, Henry P. Perry, R. D. 6 (N)

NEW YORK

Cooperstown: 1377, Clifford R. Lord, New York Historical Assn. (N)
Croton-on-Hudson: 1392, Miss Cathrine Van C. Mathews, Manor House (N)
Greenburgh: 1391, Frederick W. Twombly, 333 Old Tarrytown Rd. (N)
Harriman: 1390, Mrs. Roswell Skeel, Jr., Easter House, Stoneywold Farm (N)
Hempstead: 1046, Miss Gladys Kilmer, 215 Hilton Ave. (ch); 970, Mrs. T. W. Kilmer, 215 Hilton Ave. (ch)
New York City: 1394, Dorothy C. Barck, Librarian, N. Y. Historical Soc., 170 Central Park West (N); 1384, Albert Boni, 26 W. 56th St. (N); 1346, George C. Groce, 25 Prospect Place (N); 1170, Richard M Lederer, 285 Madison Ave. (ch); 1169, Dr. Horace W. Northrop (D); 19, William B. Sprague (D); 904, I. Warshaw, 752 West End Ave. (ch); 1379, Alice Winchester, 40 E. 49th St. (N)
Syracuse: 1066, Mr. L. A. Johnson, 1114 S. Salina St. (N)
West Brighton: 1382, Vernon B. Hampton, 301 Hart Ave (N)
West Hempstead: 1381, Mrs. T. Wendell Kilmer, Jr., Grand and Mayfair Aves. (N)

NORTH CAROLINA

Raleigh: 1374, North Carolina Historical Commission, C. C. Crittenden, secty., Box 138 (N)

OHIO

Cleveland: 1383, Cleveland Museum Library, College Center Station (S)

RHODE ISLAND

Providence: 1300, Mrs. H. T. Hulray, 15 Cold Spring St. (N)

UTAH

Salt Lake City: 1396, President, Daughters of Utah Pioneers, c/o Information Bureau (S)

VERMONT

Montpelier: 1367, Vermont Historical Society, Earle Williams Newton, Curator (S)
Trumbridge: 935, Edward R. Flint (ch)

WASHINGTON

Seattle: 1348, University of Washington Library (S)

The Questionaire

Questionnaires recently received have been tabulated as follows. For key to abbreviations, see Page 7 or the Directory of Collectors, Dealers and Museums which was circulated with the last issue of THE CHRONICLE.

PENNSYLVANIA

Swarthmore: Mrs. Waldo B. Davison, 730 Harward Ave. (C). Collects TX. Wants LP. Write *. Visit.

Hair Clippers

By JOSEPH NATHAN KANE

Clippers for cutting hair were originally imported from England and France until 1876. George Henry Coates specialized in repairing them and became so expert that he made several improvements upon them. His product was so well constructed that in 1876 he received an order from McCoy and Saunders for 5,000 clippers which he made in the basement of his home on Dewey Street, Worcester, Mass. This practically stopped the importation of clippers as his product was superior.

Silver Making

(*Continued from page* 194)

During the Renaissance, as Symonds points out, silversmithing, or training in goldsmithing and silversmithing, was an essential step in the preparation for all advanced art studies. They gave the potential artist a familiarity with materials and techniques and tools, and demanded from him a technical nicety that served him all his life, so that in the future, in his advanced studies, he was never dependent upon hirelings or journeymen to do the work that was necessary.

In England, in the seventeenth century, goldsmiths specialized. One man did the hammer work, another man did the chasing, another the embossing. The guild deplored this custom and made it a rule that, at that time, a masterpiece done completely by one person must be presented before the person could have his mark as a member of the Worshipful Company. In America, there was very little specialization. The men worked from beginning to end with their own tools, tools which they had frequently made themselves, and followed each procedure without help aside from that of their apprentices whom they trained themselves. They were artists. Although one feels that the Puritans or people in New Netherlands didn't talk very much about art, one does find in records of the day frequent mention of artists. If you study them closely, you will always find that a man who did his job thoroughly and well,—the butcher or baker or candlestick maker, and certainly the silversmith who made such pieces as I have shown you in the last few slides,—is referred to as an artist.

Sprague Memorial Volume

To complete the second volume of THE CHRONICLE as a memorial to Mr. Sprague a number of articles, short and long, are needed. Several members have volunteered such articles for these two issues, but more are needed. If you have a piece of any length which you could contribute, please send it to Mr. Hatch, Editor pro tem, 125 Washington Ave., Albany, N. Y.

COMMUNICATIONS

To the Editor:

I have a large amount of duplicate material of Early American material which has no relation to the type of material I am interested in collecting, and I am anxious to have more which is definately related to my own area. I am specifically trying to collect Virginia material. If any of your readers have Virginia material of any kind relating to Early American Industries and would be interested in making trades, will you have them write you and forward such communications to me. VIRGINIAN

The above suggestion, as an experiment, will be followed. Any communications addressed to Virginian sent to us will be forwarded.—ED.

From MISS MARY EARLE GOULD:

"A friend gave me a basket about which she knows nothing, but she thought it was a piece for a museum. It is made of willow and reed, I believe. It measures about 40 inches long by 17 inches wide and 24 inches high, with a large heavy handle of the same material. The willow is the size of a small little finger and as far apart as the rungs of a windsor chair-back. It is the size of a child's coffin, as someone said. Now comes the hearsay that it was used for shipping champagne bottles. Can you enlighten me or help me through THE CHRONICLE? Another question: Of what wood were sand-shakers made, besides maple? It is a heavy wood and apparently from foreign shores. Both the heart and the sap wood show in some sanders."

"I am sending you pictures of two odd items, in which your readers may be interested. The first is a 'pie box,' made and used in the days of church sociables. It is not unlike a cheese box, except for being deeper. A wooden rack with three or four peg legs was made to fit inside. One pie was placed on the bottom of the box, the rack put over it and a second pie rested on the rack. This enabled two pies to travel unharmed.

"The other is a wash board, made in the days of spool beds. As each spool rotates, the wear is not so great."

The Edior Pro-tem in looking up material on an India Ink Institute supposedly active in this country before 1930's, has been trying to gather information on the use and manufacture of inks in Early America. If any member has found early references on ink use and manufacture, especially of India ink, the Editor Pro-tem would appreciate having word of them.

From EDWARD DURELL:

"For some time before his death Mr. Sprague had urged me to write for THE CHRONICLE an article on hand forks used on the farm, as this was one of the items on which I had specialized in collecting.

"Now that we have lost this most beloved member, I wish to write such an article and offer it for the memorial issue which is now contemplated.

"To complete my article I need a photograph of one fork which I do not have in my collection. This is a fork which was in general use in this country from about 1850 to 1890. It had a wooden handle and wooden cross bar or head, into which head metal tines approximately 12 inches in length were inserted. The number of tines varied from three to six, with four being the most common variety.

"If any member has such a fork and would send it to me for photographing or would send me a photograph made on glossy paper, I should be most grateful as I want to include such a photograph in my article."

From ELIZABETH HAYNES:

"I had hopes of finding a loom especially intended for making fringe, although I really see no reason why any loom of the sort used for braid might not have been used for fringe by setting the warps up at one side only.

"The special exhibition of Fringes, Tassels and Galloons now being held at the Cooper Union Museum for the Arts of Decoration will continue, but all the pieces being shown are Museum property and will be kept as a study collection. For this reason it is desirable to have all the information we can get about fringe-making. If any of your members or readers can assist us with information on fringe looms in America, we would greatly appreciate it."

Annual Meeting

(*Continued from page* 196)

Richmond, S. I., N. Y.; James C. Sawyer, Durham, N. H.; Alexander J. Wall, N. Y. Historical Society, New York City; Albert B. Wells, Wells Historical Museum, Southbridge, Mass.

Directors: 1 year—George A. Ball, Muncie, Ind.; F. E. Brasch, Smithsonian Institute Library, Washington, D. C.; Maj. A. Erland Goyette, Peterborough, N. H.; Titus E. Geesey, R. D. 2, Wilmington, Del.; Rudolph P. Hommell, Gargoyle, Richlandtown, Pa.; Warren C. Lane, 74 Front St., Worcester, Mass.; Lawrence B. Romaine, Bedford St., Middleboro, Mass.; George M. Simmons, Richmondville, N. Y.; Charles Messer Stow, Hotel Delmonico, New York City; John S. Williams, Old Chatham, N. Y.

Mr. Hatch, as retiring Treasurer, opened a discussion on the costs of maintaining the organization and of printing THE CHRONICLE. After considerable discussion it was moved that the basic dues of the Association after the first of January in 1943 be raised to $2.00. The meeting adjourned at 3:30 P.M. and was followed by an executive session of all newly elected Directors present.

Members of the Association attending the Worcester meeting were extended a cordial invitation to visit the Worcester Historical Society, the American Antiquarian Society and the Quinabug Village near Southbridge. A number of members of the Association visited the latter organization on Sunday after the meeting.

At a special meeting of the Directors of the Association called in November at Hotel Roosevelt in New York City, it was decided to postpone action on increasing the dues of the Association until the next meeting of the Association as a whole, so as to give those not present an opportunity to learn of the intended resolution and to express their views if unable to attend the meeting.

Other action taken by the committee will be reported in the issue of THE CHRONICLE to follow shortly.